Blue sky SOCIETY TRUST

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

LETTER FROM BSST FOUNDER

Dear Supporters,

I extend warm greetings, Sawubona, Mhoro, Mholweni, Dumela, Hallo, and Wa Lalapo, encompassing the rich diversity of African languages as we close the chapter on 2023. Our journey to effect meaningful change in conservation, communities, and our environment demands steadfast passion, perseverance, and collaboration. This path, often spanning years if not decades, requires a deep commitment to see positive transformations take root. Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts to success. The preservation of our planet's precious biodiversity, the evolution of community perspectives, and the cultivation of eco-conscious generations through mindful education necessitate unwavering dedication, and understanding that every action counts. We must sow the seeds of change daily, for there is no space for passive bystanders. It's tireless work, often on the frontlines, knowing that each effort contributes to a greater whole.

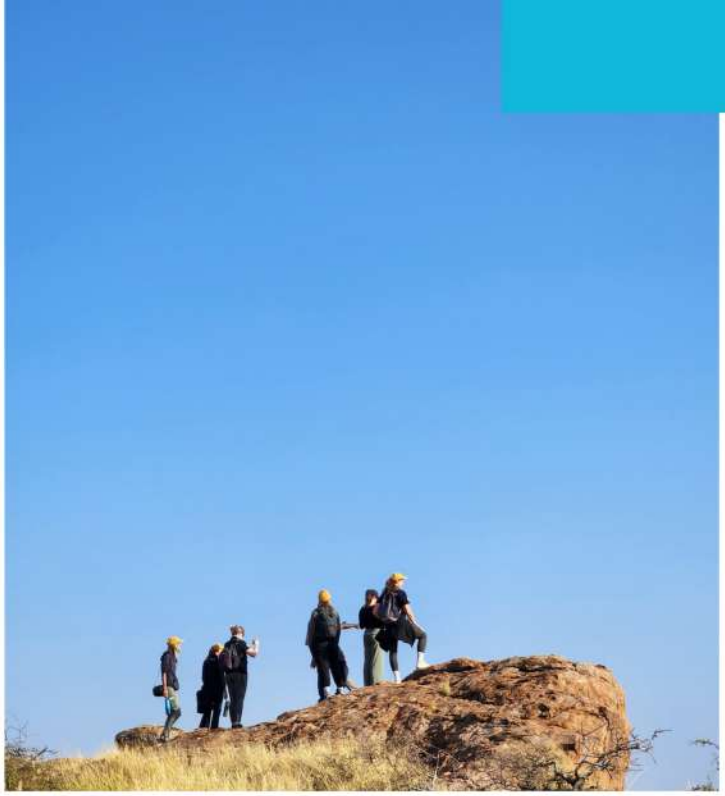
Upon reflection of our accomplishments in the past year, I am filled with humility and gratitude. Despite facing funding challenges and other obstacles, our projects have persisted, allowing us to expand our influence and impact. Our success is attributed to the dedication of our small yet passionate and productive team. Year after year, the Blue Sky Society Trust family inspires more individuals and corporations to join us in our mission, making tangible differences both locally and globally. We remain humbled by the tireless efforts of our colleagues and the trailblazers who came before us.

We remain resolute in our commitment to engage more people at various levels in supporting the humanitarian, environmental, and conservation projects we champion. This report highlights the continuation of our all-women 'Journeys with Purpose' and the ongoing progress of our Soul2Sole project. Additionally, we are steadily increasing our monthly donors through the "1 in 1000 project" and focusing on expanding our merchandise business in 2024. We eagerly anticipate your continued support.

On behalf of the Blue Sky Society Trust team, I express heartfelt thanks for your unwavering support of our mission. We invite you to stand with us in safeguarding wildlife and wild places as we journey into the upcoming year.

Warm regards,

Carla geyser



OVERVIEW

Blue Sky Society Trust is a beacon of hope and change, spearheading impactful humanitarian and conservation initiatives through the collective efforts of volunteers, corporates, and collaborative partnerships. At the heart of our work lies a profound commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of those in need and the preservation of our natural heritage.

Through the dedication of volunteers, Blue Sky Society brings to life various projects aimed at uplifting communities and protecting wildlife. Volunteers contribute their time, skills, and passion to initiatives such as distributing footwear to children in impoverished rural areas, refurbishing educational facilities, and supporting wildlife conservation efforts through fundraising and awareness campaigns. Their unwavering dedication and hands-on involvement are instrumental in driving positive change and fostering sustainable development..

In parallel, corporates play a pivotal role in supporting Blue Sky Society's mission through generous donations, sponsorships, and employee engagement initiatives. By aligning their corporate social responsibility goals with our projects, corporates not only contribute financial resources but also leverage their expertise and networks to amplify our impact. Their support enables us to scale our initiatives, reach more beneficiaries, and create lasting change in communities and ecosystems.

Furthermore, collaborations with like-minded organizations and individuals are integral to the success of Blue Sky Society's endeavors. By joining forces with partners across various sectors, we leverage collective strengths, resources, and networks to tackle complex challenges more effectively. Collaborations enable us to pool expertise, share best practices, and maximize our impact on both humanitarian and conservation fronts.

Together, through the combined efforts of volunteers, corporates, and collaborative partnerships, Blue Sky Society continues to make a tangible and sustainable difference in the world. With each project, we strive to empower communities, protect biodiversity, and inspire positive change, ultimately building a brighter and more sustainable future for generations to come.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Blue Sky Society Board of Trustees, consisting of Bronwyn Laing, Nicola Rutherfoord, and Andre Liebenberg, has been instrumental in supporting the initiatives of the organization since its inception. Their unwavering dedication and commitment have played a pivotal role in guiding the strategic direction of Blue Sky Society, ensuring that its projects and endeavors align with its core values and mission. Through their leadership and expertise, they have provided invaluable guidance and oversight, helping to propel the organization forward in its mission to make a positive impact on conservation, communities, and the environment. Their continued support and involvement serve as a cornerstone of the organization's success.

HUMANITARIAN

SOUL2SOLE

Since its establishment in 2016, the Soul2Sole initiative, operating under the auspices of the Blue Sky Society Trust, has remained steadfast in its commitment to providing footwear to underprivileged children in rural communities. Over the years, the initiative has distributed more than 16,340 pairs of shoes, whether new for school or gently used, with the goal of instilling hope, pride, and dignity in these young individuals. By ensuring that children have access to essential footwear, Soul2Sole not only meets their practical needs but also nurtures a sense of self-worth and possibility, especially among those facing economic hardships. Through this ongoing initiative, the Blue Sky Society Trust continues to have a significant impact on the lives of disadvantaged youth, offering them a brighter future, one shoe at a time.

DONATIONS AND INITIATIVES

EVA Industries made a generous contribution to our initiative by donating 597 colorful flip-flops to the Blue Sky Society on February 21, 2023. These flip-flops were distributed to multiple locations across KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), along with an additional 593 pairs of school shoes. Through collaboration with the Kingsley Holgate Foundation, the Blue Sky Society Trust expanded its impact by distributing these shoes to various creches in Zululand.
Boys: 253
Girls: 183
Total: 436

Donated shoes to Nunu Jobe in the Isimangaliso Community:
Boys: 34
Girls: 42
Total: 76

Provided shoes to Lundy Shaw in Nambiti Wild Connection:
Boys: 39
Girls: 42
Total: 81

In collaboration with the Blue Sky Society Trust, the Zululand Conservation Trust (ZCT) facilitated a shoe distribution event on June 22nd and 23rd, 2023. During this initiative, 110 children from disadvantaged backgrounds received essential items including school shoes, socks, uniforms, and other necessities. The joint team, comprising members from Manyoni and ZCT, dedicated two days to engaging with the communities. Building and nurturing relationships between wildlife areas and local communities are imperative for fostering mutual understanding and support. Second-hand or pre-loved clothes were also distributed to all children as an add on.
Schools benefited:

- Manyoni Primary School
- Vezukukhanya Primary School
- Obani Primary School
- Senzokuhle Secondary School
- Mandlakazi Secondary School

KINGSLEY HOLGATE FOUNDATION / PROJECT RHINO

Donated 79 pairs of new school shoes and 86 pairs of assorted shoes to mothers in creches in Zululand as part of the Rhino Art project.
Donation made by Deluxe Footwear worth R34,152.70.

SOUL2SOLE ONELOGIX:

On August 1st, 2023, Soul2Sole demonstrated its commitment to community support by donating shoes and uniforms valued at R50,000 to Bonela Primary School, benefiting 83 children from underprivileged backgrounds. This initiative aimed to alleviate the financial burden on families and ensure that every child has the necessary attire for school.

A team from Onelogix dedicated their morning to distributing shoes, socks, and school bags, showcasing a remarkable team effort. Such corporate involvement in giving back to communities is crucial in South Africa, not only for addressing immediate needs but also for fostering a culture of social responsibility and collective well-being.

HUMANITARIAN - HEART2HAND

Creche Support - Kingsley Holgate Foundation:

In March 2023, our team collaborated with the Kingsley Holgate Foundation for three days of impactful work. Utilizing our Land Rovers, volunteers engaged in painting and repair activities to improve the 'Centres of Hope' in Babanango and Loziba.

This endeavor was made possible by the generous donation of paint from Dekro Paints, valued at R3400, which revitalized the walls of these centers. The team's efforts included creating vibrant wildlife-themed murals, aimed at captivating the imagination of the children who frequent these spaces. Through this initiative, our goal was to cultivate a deeper connection between young minds and the natural world, using art as a tool for exploration and appreciation.

CONSERVATION PROJECTS

SNARE REMOVAL

In partnership with multiple organizations, we've united efforts to raise both funds and awareness for snare removal, providing crucial aid to Wildlife Vets Dr. Joel Alves and Dr. Ben Muller from WildScapes Veterinary & Conservation Services in their commendable mission. Together, our collaborative endeavors have been focused on rescuing a diverse array of animals, including buffalo, lions, hyenas, and leopards, all of whom have recently become victims of bush meat poaching. These creatures often sustain severe and at times fatal, injuries from snares.

Our coalition, consisting of African Wildlife Vets, Wild Wonderful World, Down2theWire, and the Blue Sky Society Trust, remains steadfast in our commitment to supporting wildlife vets and easing the plight of these magnificent beings. Driven by a collective passion and unwavering dedication to effecting positive change, we persevere in our efforts to safeguard and conserve wildlife amidst the challenges we face.

Total donation: R6613.22

JOURNEYS WITH PURPOSE

Journeys With Purpose seamlessly blends the thrill of adventure travel with a commitment to conservation, all while raising crucial funds and awareness for conservation projects. Building upon Carla's previous expeditions, these journeys, now shorter in duration, focus on Southern Africa, offering travelers a unique opportunity to explore safely while making a positive impact. Participants can immerse themselves in the region's breathtaking landscapes and diverse wildlife while actively contributing to conservation efforts. Whether it's assisting with wildlife monitoring, habitat restoration, or community engagement initiatives, these trips provide a platform for travelers to not only experience the beauty of the natural world but also to actively participate in its preservation. With Journeys With Purpose, travelers can embark on meaningful adventures, leaving behind a lasting legacy of conservation and goodwill.

JWP TURTLES & TUSKS EXPEDITION 2023

In February 2023, a remarkable journey unfolded in Zululand as the JWP Turtles and Tusks expedition convened, showcasing the power of collective action for conservation. This small group of dedicated women banded together, raising an impressive R70,000 to support vital initiatives. Their efforts funded the acquisition of three elephant collars in collaboration with African Wildlife Vets & Ezemvelo, enhancing efforts to monitor and protect these majestic creatures. Additionally, their generosity extended to the provision of two rescue stretchers for turtles and financial support for turtle rescue operations at Ushaka and Seaworld/KZN Wildlife. Through their collaborative spirit and unwavering commitment to conservation, these individuals demonstrated the profound impact that can be achieved when passionate individuals unite for a common cause.

JWP BEWILD 2023

In May 2023, six women from the Netherlands embarked on an enriching journey across South Africa and Botswana's Tuli Block as part of the JWP Bewild expedition. Over a span of 12 days, these determined individuals came together with a common goal: to actively contribute to wildlife conservation efforts. Their collaborative efforts yielded an impressive achievement, raising a substantial R110,000. This significant sum was allocated to support three crucial projects led by the Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT): A Vulture Ambulance, the Livestock Guardian Dog Project, and then in Botswana with Earth Awareness initiatives such as tree planting, particularly focusing on Baobab projects in the Tuli Block, and engaging with the Environmental Club of a local rural school. Through their unwavering dedication and passion for preserving biodiversity, these women epitomized the impactful results that can be attained through collective action and unwavering commitment to conservation.

FUNDS RAISED 2023

In product and donations, our Blue Sky Society Humanitarian and Conservation projects raised a total of

R315,000.00 IN 2023.

CONCLUSION

The year 2023 has been defined by impactful collaborations, generous donations from both individuals and corporations, and the remarkable efforts of the Journeys with Purpose Ladies who participate in expeditions while simultaneously raising funds and awareness for conservation projects. These collective endeavors have made significant contributions to both human communities and wildlife conservation efforts. As the Blue Sky Society Trust, we remain steadfast in our commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of those in need and in the preservation of our natural heritage. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all partners, donors, and volunteers who have made these achievements possible. Through purposeful journeys and collaborations, we have become stronger, but the world still requires our assistance. The Blue Sky Society Trust can only continue its vital work with your generous support. We eagerly anticipate embarking on many more adventures in 2024, continuing to make a meaningful impact in the world.

OUR BUSINESS PARTNERS, SPONSORS AND DONORS

We extend our deepest love and gratitude to the individuals, corporates, and organizations whose sponsorship and support have fueled our projects, initiatives, and mission. Your unwavering backing in 2023, despite challenges, speaks volumes about your belief in hope and opportunity. Your generosity has enabled us to make a significant and meaningful impact, and for that, we are profoundly thankful.

**Please note that while we've listed our donors and sponsors below, if anyone has been inadvertently omitted, we sincerely apologize. Your contributions, whether big or small, are invaluable in assisting animals and people in need, a priceless gift indeed.

- Amber Patton
- Ami Pearson
- Antonia (Suzanne) Verbunt
- Aramex South Africa
- Beckhoff Automation (Pty) Ltd
- Bronwyn Laing
- Carina Brunner
- Cathryn Gill
- Cecilia McNicol
- Cooper Tires
- David Reed
- Dekro Paints (Greg Meaker)
- Deluxe Footwear (Deepak Dayal)
- Erin Dickson
- EVA Industries
- Expand A Sign (Don Bailey)
- Fiona Maclean/Kearney
- Fleur Severs
- Front Runner
- Gina Arntzen
- Henricus Lasance
- Ildiko Hegyi
- Ken Tilly
- Kerri Martinaglia
- Kerry Meyer
- Kirsty Eichbauer
- Marcia Kimpton
- Margot Lasance
- Myrna Saulez
- Network Configuration (Erica Floweday)
- Nicole Unger
- Noxie Wichmann
- Onelogistix Warehousing
- Professional Evaluation and Research (PEAR)
- Remke Lasance
- Sandy McNicol
- Saysha Till
- Steph De Wit
- Stephanie Davies
- Synvita (Kelly Ford)
- Teri Baumgartner
- Travis Ludlow
- Virginia Scholes
- Warren Mitchell
- Warrick (Wok) Shannon
- Wendi Conti
- Whitehart Web Development
- Willempje Vrins
- Yolande Kruger

Blue sky SOCIETY TRUST

2023 ANNUAL REPORT